

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Redding Field Office
355 Hemsted Dr.
Redding, CA 96002

Environmental Assessment
EA Number CA 360-RE-2003-71

October 20, 2003

PROJECT: CA 45567 Redding Gun Club Direct Sale

Proponent: Redding Field Office
355 Hemsted Dr.
Redding, CA 96002
(530) 224-2100

**Location, Site Description
and Use of the Area:** M.D.M., T. 33N., R. 9W., sec. 32, 33 in Shasta County,
California.

Map Location: Shasta Dam, 7.5 minute quadrangle, California

Background

This document is an environmental assessment of the disposal of public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management, Redding Field Office. The purpose is to provide a regional firing range in place of several former shooting spots that have been closed.

Since 1986 the Redding Bureau of Land Management Field Office has cooperated with local planning agencies, and groups to provide a location for a regional firing range.

Between 1932 and 1986, the Redding Gun Club (Gun Club), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, leased City of Redding (City) property for the operation of a public firing range. The range was used by members of the public, law enforcement, and was used for special meets by the Gun Club. In 1984, the City informed the Gun Club that the firing range must be relocated. Several alternative sites were examined but none were found to be adequate and the range was closed.

In 1989, an informal consortium of law enforcement agencies and city/county officials met to study the problem of finding a new site. The group examined several locations and settled on the 3,000-acre Hunt Ranch (east of Redding) as their best choice. \$300,000 had been budgeted from Pittman-Robertson^a funds for range developments. The City subsequently submitted a grant

^a Pittman Robertson Act (1937) provides federal aid from an excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition to the states for purposes such as hunter education and firing range development. In California the funds are made available through the Department of Fish and Game.

application for the funds, and began discussions with Shasta County regarding the range and preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

In 1990, the City completed the EIR for the Hunt Ranch and it was certified as adequate. Although the owner had offered the land for sale to the City, the City failed to open escrow and the property was sold to someone else. The grant funds that had been available for construction of the range were then allocated to another project.

In 1991, the City began looking at another site off Iron Mountain Road about three miles north of the town of Keswick. A noise test, along with other environmental work, was conducted. The owner of the property wanted more money than the appraised fair market value and more money than the City was willing to pay. The site was dropped from further consideration.

In the same year, the City examined a site on public land on Walker Mine Road. The Redding Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the managing agency, was then in the middle of writing the Redding Resource Management Plan (RMP). The RMP was adopted in 1993. On page 46 of the RMP it states: “develop an integrated resources activity plan for the Interlakes Special Recreation Management Area which: . . . identifies potential site(s) for a regional firing range . . . “

In the years after the approval of the RMP, several meetings were held with representatives from Shasta County (County), Shasta County Sheriff’s Department, City of Anderson, the City, the City of Redding Police Department, the City of Shasta Lake, the Gun Club, various other shooting organizations and the BLM. The major players were the County, the Sheriff’s Department, the City, the City of Redding Police Department, the Gun Club, and the BLM. The purpose of these meetings was to identify the exact location for the proposed range and identify to whom title of the property would be transferred.

In September 1996, the County, having taken the lead on the gun range issue, sent a letter requesting the BLM to pursue fee transfer of a 60-acre site to the County.

The BLM Interlakes Special Recreation Management Area (ISRMA) Plan was approved in January 1998. This RMP implementation plan identifies a site off of Walker Mine Road northeast of Keswick Dam on the Sacramento River, now known as the Walker Mine site, for disposal to Shasta County. The County would develop a regional 60-acre-to-160-acre firing range. The Interlakes Plan stated that management proposals on this property would be developed and evaluated by Shasta County under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Since then, however, for various reasons, the City, the City Police Department, the County and the County Sheriff’s Department have decided not to participate in this project. The main proponents remaining are the Gun Club and BLM.

On January 3, 2001 the Redding Gun Club submitted a letter requesting that BLM sell a 200-acre site to be used as a regional firing range. The Gun Club later requested by letter that the sale be in two phases. Phase 1 would include approximately 100 acres. Phase 2 would include about 160 acres of public land around the Phase 1 property, for a total of approximately 260 acres that may be transferred to the Gun Club. The additional land would serve as a buffer for the firing range.

Any public land not transferred to the Gun Club in Phase 2 would remain part of the retention area of the ISRMA and would not be available for disposal.

The history of this project shows the need for an RMP amendment and a direct sale of the subject public land to the Redding Gun Club which will meet the community need and public benefit of providing a location for the possible location for a regional firing range if approved by the County. The RMP amendment will be addressed in a separate environmental assessment.

A Notice of Realty Action (NORA) was published in the Federal Register on October 2, 2002. The NORA was published for three consecutive weeks in the Redding newspaper the Record Searchlight starting on October 14, 2002. The notice included 63.50 acres of the approximately 100 acres of the present Phase 1 sale. The notice also was sent to adjacent landowners and other interested parties.

During preparation of the environmental assessment, two protests were made against plans for sale of the public land for the use as a firing range. Reasons cited in the protests were that a firing range was out of place in the rural area and would lower property values. The Gun Club must apply for County plan and zoning changes for the designed range. The County will hold public meetings and will also complete a California Environmental Quality Act analysis that will address the specific effects of developing and operating a firing range at the Walker Mine site.

The patent for Phase 1 of this project would state that the land is being disposed of by direct sale for a regional firing range and the following condition would be placed upon the patent. Should the regional firing range fail to be developed, the BLM retains the right to acquire the land back at fair market value determined by a BLM appraisal. The land could be acquired back into federal ownership through purchase, exchange, or donation. BLM land acquisitions may require a longer process than typical commercial land sales. BLM retains the right to either accept or reject acquisition of the parcel for a period of 12 months after it is offered for sale. If acquisition is accepted BLM retains the right to complete the acquisition within 24 months.

Land Use Plan Conformance and other Regulatory Compliance

Both the RMP and the ISRMA implementation plan analyze the needs and proposals for a site for a regional firing range. The RMP stated that an activity level plan should be developed for the Interlakes Area that identifies potential sites for a regional firing range. An approved RMP Amendment will allow the disposal of public land by direct sale to the Redding Gun Club for a regional firing range. The sale will not be completed until the amendment process is completed. If the amendment is not approved the sale will not take place. This direct sale was previously serialized as case file number CA-43966.

The proposed firing range site would conform to the ISRMA Plan. Page 20 of the ISRMA Record of Decision describes target shooting and development of a regional firing range east of Keswick Reservoir. The area is outside of the designated city limits for both the City of Redding and the City of Shasta Lake. The proposed firing range site would conform to the Shasta County General Plan.

The environmental assessment is number CA 360-RE-2003-71 for this direct sale.

The BLM is analyzing the sale of up to 260 acres of public land that will be disposed of by direct sale to the Redding Gun Club for a potential regional firing range. The Redding Gun Club would then apply to the County of Shasta for a permit to develop the firing range. The County would then analyze the specifics of the firing range through the California Environmental Quality Act.

Purpose and Need for the Project

The BLM has been working with various agencies for a number of years to find a location for a regional firing range. Many sites were looked at with some noise testing being done in 1991. There is a lot of community support for a regional firing range which included both Congressman Wally Herger and the County of Shasta Board of Supervisors.

The Redding Gun Club has been the lessee of the public firing range in the past and has remained engaged throughout the years until finally applying for a direct sale for public land shown in this document which includes two phases. Phase 1 would include approximately 100 acres which would be the main area of the firing range. Phase 2 would include up to approximately 160 acres that may be disposed of to the Redding Gun Club at a later time if needed for public safety as a buffer area around the range. The disposal of public land in Phase 2 is not analyzed in this document. A separate environmental assessment will be prepared for the public land in Phase 2.
on its own.

Full consideration of the land sales criteria and competitive bidding procedures of Section 203 of FLPMA have been analyzed. The Redding Gun Club is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The proposed regional firing range has been a long time project with much community support as shown in the background section of this EA. It has been determined that a competitive or modified competitive sale method is not appropriate for this project and the public interest is best be served by a direct sale. According to 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 2711.3-3(a) a direct sale method (without competition) may be utilized, when in the opinion of the authorized officer, a competitive sale is not appropriate and the public interest would best be served by a direct sale. Examples include, but are not limited to: (1) A tract identified for transfer to State or local government or nonprofit organization.

Current Sale Policy

The BLM's current policy and regulations in 43 CFR 2710.0-6 (c)(1-5) require the use of competitive sale procedures unless the authorized officer determines the public interest would best be served by modified competitive bidding or direct (non-competitive) sale. In no case may land be sold for less than fair market value. It is BLM policy to fully disclose all aspects of our public land sales program, including the rationale for conducting a direct (non-competitive) sale and disclosure of the appraised value for the sale.

In April of 2002 the Washington Office (WO) issued Instruction Memorandum (IM) 2002-143 and later 2003-259. This earlier guidance requires that environmental documents, decisions and notices must reference full consideration of the land sales criteria from Section 203 of FLPMA and document the rationale for use of other than competitive bidding methods. The IM states:

“Particular care must be taken to fully document the decision and rationale for the use of a direct sale approach.”

For this direct sale, full consideration of the land sales criteria and competitive bidding procedures of Section 203 of FLPMA have been analyzed. The Redding Gun Club is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The proposed regional firing range has been a long time project with much community support as shown in the introduction section of this EA. It has been determined that a competitive or modified competitive sale method is not appropriate for this project and the public interest would best be served by a direct sale. According to 43 CFR 2711.3-3(a) a direct sale method (without competition) may be utilized, when in the opinion of the authorized officer, a competitive sale is not appropriate and the public interest would best be served by a direct sale. Examples include, but are not limited to: (1) A tract identified for transfer to State or local government or nonprofit organization.

Scoping and Issues

During formulation of the Redding RMP, or the ISRMA Plan no opposition was expressed by the public at large or by Shasta County government regarding disposal of federal land managed by BLM for consideration of a regional firing range. The County of Shasta had been the intended party for the land transfer.

Environmental Assessment RE-2002-38 was completed for this direct sale using the interdisciplinary team of BLM resource specialists. On August 5, 2002, the BLM issued an Environmental Assessment, Finding of No Significant Impacts and Decision Record for the sale action. A Modification to the Decision Record was issued on April 1, 2003 which addressed an updated appraisal.

The Notice of Realty Action (NORA) was published for the direct sale in the Federal Register on October 2, 2002, which commenced a 45-day public comment period for the sale action. The NORA was also published in a local newspaper for three consecutive weeks between October 14 and October 28, 2002. The notice included 63.50 acres of the approximately 100 acres of the present Phase 1 sale. The notice also was sent to adjacent landowners and other interested parties.

Since then an RMP amendment is being completed and the direct sale has been reconfigured to include approximately 100 acres of public land. The issues analyzed in this document are related to the disposal of approximately 100 acres shown as Phase 1 to the Redding Gun Club, a non profit organization.

Issues concerning cultural resources, threatened and endangered species, minerals, appraised value, hazardous materials, and existing uses will be discussed.

Those issues associated specifically with a firing range, such as noise, traffic, as well as public safety of a regional firing range will be addressed to the extent possible with the information that is known. These specific issues will be addressed further by the County's CEQA analysis during the permitting process since more information will be available and provided to the County in a development plan.

The issues above include issues brought forward by the public during a comment period for a previous Notice of Realty Action for the sale of the subject public land for a regional firing range.

Proposed Action and Alternatives

The proposed action is the direct sale of public land to the Redding Gun Club of approximately 100 acres, shown below as Phase 1. The sale would include both the surface and mineral estates.

Approximately 160 acres shown as Phase 2 below would be analyzed as needed sometime in the future for disposal to the Redding Gun Club.

The patent for Phase 1 of this project would state that the land is being disposed of by direct sale for a regional firing range and the following condition would be placed upon the RMP amendment and direct sale of this public land: Should the regional firing range not be developed, the BLM retains the right to acquire the land back at fair market value determined by a BLM appraisal into federal ownership through acquisition, exchange, or donation. The BLM retains the right to either accept or reject acquisition of the parcel for a period of 12 months and if accepted, a period of 24 months to execute the acquisition.

The legal descriptions for the public lands:

Phase 1 includes:

T. 33 N., R. 5 W., MDM, Shasta County, California
Section 33: W $\frac{1}{2}$ of Lot 17, Lot 18, N $\frac{1}{2}$ of Lot 19, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Lot 19, Lot 20;

containing approximately 100 acres.

Phase 2 includes:

T. 33 N., R. 5 W., MDM, Shasta County, California,
Section 32: E $\frac{1}{2}$ of Lot 15, E $\frac{1}{2}$ of Lot 22,
Section 33: SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Lot 19, S $\frac{1}{2}$ of Lot 9, S $\frac{1}{2}$ of Lot 10, S $\frac{1}{2}$ of Lot 11, Lot 16, E $\frac{1}{2}$ of Lot 17, Lot 21,

containing approximately 160 acres,

totaling approximately 260 acres for Phase 1 and Phase 2.

The No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the parcel would not be offered for sale to the Redding Gun Club. The parcel would remain in federal ownership and the RMP decision for the lands would continue to be implemented. They would be managed as part of the Sacramento Greenway as

designated in the Interlakes Special Recreation Management Plan, with the exception of the development of the firing range.

Alternatives Considered but Dismissed from Further Consideration

Exchange Alternative

The Gun Club has not offered any lands to exchange for Phase 1 and therefore an exchange will not be considered. It has been determined that disposal of this parcel through land exchange would not be in the public interest and an exchange will not be analyzed further in this document.

Other Sale Method Alternative

Full consideration of the land sales criteria and competitive bidding procedures of Section 203 of FLPMA have been analyzed. The Redding Gun Club is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The proposed regional firing range has been a long time project with much community support as shown in the introduction section of this EA. It has been determined that a competitive or modified competitive sale method is not appropriate for this project and the public interest would best be served by a direct sale. According to 43 CFR 2711.3-3(a) a direct sale method (without competition) may be utilized, when in the opinion of the authorized officer, a competitive sale is not appropriate and the public interest would best be served by a direct sale. Examples include, but are not limited to: (1) A tract identified for transfer to State or local government or nonprofit organization. This alternative will not be analyzed further in this document.

Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act Lease/Patent Alternative

The Gun Club would need title to the land before they could apply for needed permits to develop the firing range. Under the R&PP Act there must be adequate development of the public land under an R&PP lease before a patent would be considered. There also could be a concern that BLM (the U.S. government) could be named a responsible party for generating hazardous lead. This alternative will not be analyzed further in this document.

Lease Alternative

The BLM would not approve a lease for a firing range because of the possible generation of hazardous materials and resulting liability. This alternative will not be analyzed further in this document.

Alternate Sites for the Firing Range

Nearby residents have stated that the Walker Mine is not an appropriate place for a firing range. Other areas have been investigated in several public planning efforts over the last 19 years. The Walker Mine has been selected as the most suitable compromise site for the requested shooting range by Shasta County. The 1993 Redding Resource Management Plan stated that a potential site for a regional firing range should be found in the area northwest

of Redding. The 1998, ISRMA implementation plan specifically identified this site for consideration as a regional firing range. Therefore, alternative locations will not be considered further.

Affected Environment

Physical Setting

The subject property is located northwest of Redding. The rural neighborhood of the subject property is within the BLM's Interlakes Special Recreation Management Area and bounded to the north by the Whiskeytown-Shasta-Trinity National Recreation Area. A stretch of the Sacramento River between the Shasta Dam and the Keswick Dam runs north to south through the area and to the west of the subject parcel. Shasta Dam, which lies about 10 miles north of Redding and about 4 miles north of the subject parcel, is the cornerstone of the Department of the Interior's Central Valley Project. It is the main tourist attraction to the recreation-enriched area with nearly 2.5 million visitor days per year.

Shasta County Zoning Map has the property zoned "U" Unclassified. The subject parcel is accessed by way of Walker Mine Road, a County road, which runs through the parcel. It is in a remote area with approximately 12 individual land owners on the west side of the ridge in the vicinity of the subject parcel. The subject parcel is within ½ mile from the Sacramento River on the west and a range of mountains on the east. The next closest year around residences would be more than a mile from the subject parcel and over the mountain range into the Sacramento Valley. The vegetation is mostly dense manzanita, scattered oaks and grey pines. There are no trees with commercial forest lumber value. The terrain ranges from a fairly flat meadow area in the center of the parcel to moderately rolling hills nearby and higher mountains to the east and west.

Existing Use Authorizations

The current Master Title Plat for the area shows one issued right-of-way for a power line and access road (S 3668). The power line has been removed and a relinquishment from Bureau of Reclamation and Western Area Power Administration has been requested. There is a right-of-way (ROW) reservation (CA 45206) to the BLM for administrative access across the range site. The Gun Club is aware of the right-of-way reservation that goes through the proposed gun range parcel. This reservation is for administrative access by the BLM for public safety of adjacent public lands. This reservation may be relocated in the future and would be analyzed under the CEQA requirements since it would be private land at that time. If the land remains federal land, the reservation would no longer be needed and may be relinquished by the BLM.

The Shasta County Road System map dated 1994 shows Walker Mine Road crossing the subject parcel. While no authorization has been issued for it, the road would qualify for adjudication under RS 2477.

There are no mining claims or grazing leases on the subject property.

Recreation

The area is currently being used for wildland recreation activities, e.g., horseback riding, hiking, hunting, off highway vehicle use, etc.

The area is used for target shooting. There has been interest in a non-motorized trail on the east side of the Sacramento River which would connect to the Sacramento Rail Trail on the westside of the Sacramento River. Both trails (west and east of the Sacramento River) would be connected to the existing Sacramento River trail that the City of Redding maintains downstream of Keswick Dam.

Taxes

No taxes are currently being paid on this property. BLM has a Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program which is based on the amount of eligible acres and the population of the County. For Shasta County the amount is approximately \$.10 per acre. Therefore the subject public land contributes approximately \$10 in PILT. No other revenues are derived from this parcel of public land.

Cultural Resources

The proposed sale area is within the “Old Diggins” Mining District. The extinct community of Hart, active from 1890 into the early 1990s, is associated with the district. Remnants of the town are found within the proposed sale area along with six other sites that were associated with early settlement of the area. These sites are discussed at length in a report on file with BLM by Dr. Eric Ritter. None of the sites are considered to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. A cultural survey for lands in Phase 2 will be analyzed in a separate EA at a later time.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Biological surveys were done on the public lands in this exchange with no T&E species being found. A survey for lands in Phase 2 will be analyzed in a separate EA at a later time.

Hazardous Materials

A Hazardous Materials Survey has been completed for public land in Phase 1. No hazardous materials were discovered. The public land in Phase 2 would be surveyed at a future date if needed. A report for lands in Phase 2 will be completed and included in a separate EA at a later time.

Minerals

A mineral report was completed for the project with no mineral value being found, therefore the mineral estate will be included in the direct sale of Phase 1. A mineral report for lands in Phase 2 will be completed in a separate EA at a later time.

Appraised value

The value of the parcel was determined by fair-market-value appraisal completed by a qualified appraiser. These appraisals are updated periodically. The appraisal determined the highest and best use of the parcel is “remote rural residential site.” Comparable sales of like property indicated a value of \$700 per acre or \$69,615 for the parcel. The appraisal was completed in accordance with the *Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practices* and has been reviewed by the BLM California Chief State Appraiser.

Target Shooting

There is an existing informal target shooting area within the Walker Mine area public lands that has been used by the public year around for over 25 years. There has been some noise and traffic with this historical activity. Interviews with local people show that up to 5 vehicles may be using the site at any given time. It is one of the informal shooting areas on public land in the Redding area that has not been closed due to encroaching residential development.

Noise

Walker Mine is a rural site two miles north of Redding, the major northern California city. Ambient noise in the area comes from air traffic and highway traffic two to three miles distant. It is a generally quiet area influenced by use of the area by recreational vehicles, target shooters and seasonal hunting. Casual target shooting is the source of the sharpest and loudest sounds. Because the site is buffered on the east by a ridge from rural residential housing shooting noise would not carry far. On the west, is the motorized area of the ISRMA, with many trails used by four wheel drive vehicles, motorcycles, and other forms of all terrain vehicles.

Traffic

The subject public land is reached from Walker Mine Road, west of Lake Blvd. Walker Mine Road is a paved county road to within a couple of miles from the subject parcel. The unpaved road runs through the parcel and north toward Shasta Dam. The existing road is used by casual target shooters range and other recreationists. With development of the firing range, motorized access will be prevented north of the paved road. Traffic on Walker Mine Road is expected to increase once the firing range is completed. Planned events and meets will draw additional traffic to the range. The ISRMA Plan is to develop parking areas adjacent to Walker Mine Road and install vehicle barriers to deter garbage dumping. Current plans are to gate the existing route through the property at the north end of the county road. Dumping household garbage and other wastes on public lands in the area is a chronic problem.

Public Safety

Existing uncontrolled shooting in the area is a public safety issue addressed in the ISRMA plan. The ISRMA Plan, states: “For safety purposes, close and rehabilitate roads and trails leading to managed shooting locations within the regional firing range. Provide signing that will inform the public that a regional firing range is nearby. Prohibit camping and target shooting within this sub-unit (Sacramento River Greenway).”

Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

Critical Elements

The following table summarizes potential impacts to various elements of the human environment, listed in BLM Manual H-1790-1, Appendix 5, as amended. Elements for which there are no impacts will not be discussed further in this document:

Environmental Element	Proposed Action		No Action Alternative	
	Affected	No Affect	Affected	No Affect
Air Quality		X		X
ACECs		X		X
Cultural Resources ¹		X		X
Native American Concerns ²		X		X
Farmlands		X		X
Floodplains		X		X
T&E Animal species		X		X
T&E Plant species ³		X		X
Wastes (hazardous/solid)		X		X
Water Quality		X		X
Wetlands/Riparian Zones		X		X
Wild and Scenic Rivers		X		X
Wilderness		X		X
Invasive, Nonnative Species		X		X
Environmental Justice		X		X

¹ See write-up below.

² Local Native American groups were contacted with no responses received.

³ No special status species were found.

Impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives

This section analyzes the environmental effects of disposal of approximately 100 acres of public land for purposes of developing and operating a regional shooting range. This analysis is tiered to the ISRMA Final Plan and EIS, pages 4-43 through 4-47. The BLM is not considering a detailed project plan for the regional facility, and the following analysis of this EA is based on BLM's estimate of the approximate location and characteristics of a regional shooting range. Further, it is noted that proposed action must be approved by Shasta County and will undergo more detailed environmental analysis in accordance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) procedures at such time that detailed project plans are submitted to the County.

Existing Use Authorizations

The current Master Title Plat for the area shows one issued right-of-way for a power line and access road (S 3668). The power line has been removed and the right-of-way will be relinquished by the Bureau of Reclamation and Western Area Power Administration.

The Redding Gun Club is aware of the right-of-way reservation (CA 45206) to the BLM for administrative access over the existing roads on the sale parcel, no impacts are anticipated.

The Shasta County Road System map dated 1994 shows Walker Mine Road extending into the subject parcel. While no authorization has been issued for it, the road would qualify for adjudication under RS 2477.

There are no mining claims nor grazing leases on the subject property.

Recreation

The ISRMA Plan indicates that both a loop trail and an organized shooting area could co-exist. Preliminary routes for the eastside trail in this area show the trail farther to the west along a small ridge and closer to Keswick Reservoir. The firing range faces easterly.

The potential conflict of this site with existing and proposed recreation uses was addressed in the ISMRA Plan. It was felt that the use of this site for a firing range would not impact the trail users. No other impacts associated with the sale were identified.

Taxes

According to Shasta County Assessor's Office, the Redding Gun Club is not exempt from property taxation. Property taxes are generally one percent of the selling price. Under the proposed actions the Gun Club would be paying approximately \$700 per year in property taxes for this parcel. Presently the County receives approximately \$10 from PILT.

Cultural Resources

Based upon the archaeological inventory and study no sites on the sale parcel were deemed eligible for inclusion to the National Register of Historic Places. Therefore no significant impacts to cultural resources will occur. Potential loss of the cultural resource could be partially

ameliorated through public interpretation of several of the site features. The buyer would be made aware of these sites.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Because no threatened and endangered species were found on the subject parcel there would be no effect from implementation of the amendment.

Hazardous Materials

A field survey and records search of the property revealed no hazardous materials on the subject parcel. Amending the RMP to enable disposal of the property for development of a firing range would create conditions for accumulation of lead and other potentially hazardous wastes. As part of the permitting process for the Redding Gun Club, the range facilities would be required to conform to modern safety standards to contain and control wastes.

Minerals

The mineral report for the proposed sale found no mineral values on the site. The amendment and sale would not affect mineral values.

Appraised Value

An initial appraisal completed under standard BLM methodology determined the value of the 260-acre Walker Mine parcel to be \$500 per acre. After plans were made to split the property into two parts for a 2-phase sale, a reappraisal determined the value of the 100 acre parcel to be \$700 per acre.

Target Shooting

There is an existing informal shooting range in the area of the proposed site for the proposed regional firing range that would no longer be available to the public. The proposed firing range would give the public a formal range to use in the place of the informal range.

Noise

Preliminary noise tests were conducted in April 1991 at Walker Mine and several alternate sites. Sound measurements confirmed that noise levels at defined distances from firing sites would be unlikely to exceed standard permit levels away from the site.

Noise environments for both traffic and shooting are analyzed in the ISRMA Plan on pages 3-28 to 3-30, and 4-23 to 4-24. Preliminary noise tests were conducted in April 1991 at the potential regional firing site located north of the Keswick Boat Ramp.

Traffic

The regional firing range would draw shooters from the casual shooting sites and participants in large-scale shooting events, increasing traffic from Lake Boulevard onto Walker Mine Road. One county planner has expressed concern about the ability of large motor homes to safely negotiate two or more short-radius curves in the existing roadway. The amount of traffic would be greater during times when the range would have a special event. The remainder of the year would probably be slightly higher than what is currently occurring with the informal range.

Public Safety

Public safety would improve with the controlled environment of the proposed regional range instead of the existing informal shooting range. The ISRMA incorporates measures for public safety for the adjacent public lands around the proposed range.

Environmental Effects of the No-Action Alternative

Existing Authorized Uses

With the no action alternative, the BLM would still ask the Bureau of Reclamation for a relinquishment of their right-of-way reservation (S3668) since the power line has been removed and there is no longer a need for the reservation. If the sale does not take place the right-of-way reservation to the BLM for administrative access would no longer be needed since it would remain public land. No impacts are anticipated.

Recreation

Under this alternative the RMP would not be amended and the public lands would remain part of the retention/acquisition area of the RMP. The parcel would remain in federal ownership and would be managed as part of the Sacramento Greenway as designated in the Interlakes Special Recreation Management Plan. Current recreational uses would likely continue with a possible non-motorized trail being built in the vicinity of the subject parcel sometime in the future.

Under the No Action Alternative, the Redding Gun Club would not purchase the parcel and would still have a need for a regional firing range site. With the closing of some of the historical informal shooting areas due to the encroaching residential development, people wanting to shoot will be looking for other sites. Public safety is an important concern in this alternative.

Taxes

In the No Action Alternative, there would be no increase in revenues paid to the County. PILT would remain at approximately \$10.

Cultural Resources

Under the No Action Alternative, the public land would remain in federal ownership and therefore managed according to the BLM laws and regulations.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Under the No Action Alternative, the public land would remain in federal ownership and therefore managed according to the BLM laws and regulations.

Hazardous Materials

No hazardous materials were found during a field survey. Trash dumping is a chronic problem in the area and actions such as placing a gate at the end of the Walker Mine county road are planned to deter dumping.

Minerals

Under the No Action Alternative, the public land would remain in federal ownership and managed according to the BLM laws and regulations.

Appraised Value

Under the No Action Alternative, the public land would remain in federal ownership. The appraised value of the property would not be a management issue.

Target Shooting

If the proposed firing range were not developed, other informal shooting sites would continue to be used. Public safety hazards from allowing many informal shooting sites could be greater rather than having a planned, controlled firing range available.

Noise

Under the No Action Alternative, shooting at the existing informal shooting range would continue. Shooting noise from existing use is intermittent and would be less than that experienced from a formal firing range because fewer shooters would use the site.

Traffic

Under the No Action Alternative, the informal shooting range would remain for the indefinite future. The existing amount of vehicle travel in the area is expected to increase incrementally with the growing population of Shasta County. Current actions to place a gate across the existing route that extends north from the end of the county road will eliminate public vehicle travel.

Public Safety

Without the implementation of the ISRMA-planned range, more informal shooting areas would continue to be used. It is assumed that a developed firing range would provide a higher level of public safety than allowing use of the existing scattered shooting sites.

Indirect Effects of the Proposed Direct Sale and Alternatives

Many scattered traditionally-used shooting areas are being encroached upon by rural development resulting in the closure of the sites. The regional firing range, if permitted, would give the public a safe place to shoot. BLM would close the casual shooting sites, concentrating more recreational shooting onto the regional range, consistent with the RMP and ISRMA decisions.

Plans for the ISRMA are to provide semi-primitive non-motorized use. The existing route crossing the Walker Mine area is not a designated route. This amendment would retain administrative vehicle access across the firing range management needs north of the range. Development of the firing range may necessitate relocation of the existing route.

The ISRMA plan describes a possible hiking and biking trail to be constructed between the firing range and the Sacramento River. The firing range should not interfere with the trail development. No comments were received during the ISRMA planning process that expressed an inability for the range and the trail to coexist.

Monitoring

This action will be monitored by Shasta County to ensure that the requirements for development of the property are fulfilled.

BLM will collaborate with the Gun Club to ensure an acceptable administrative route of travel will be provided through or around the property should the county abandon the road. The route will provide administrative access to public lands north of the firing range after the range is developed and the existing public road is blocked.

Mitigation Measures

Any mitigation measures for noise, public safety for other issues of the development of the firing range would be analyzed during the CEQA analysis of the County's permitting process for the proposed regional firing range.

Cumulative Effects

With the development of the regional firing range, there would be an increase in noise, traffic, and other things associated with a regional firing range. The noise and traffic during most of the year would not be much more than what is currently occurring with the informal shooting range. When special events are happening at the regional firing range there would be more traffic and more noise concentrated in the 2-3 day event that may occur once or twice a year. The firing range would be built to required standards for a facility such as this. There would be an increase in public safety due to the controlled environment of the facility. There is already existing noise and traffic from recreational vehicle use across the Sacramento River in the motorized portion of

the ISRMA. In the future, there is a plan to build a non-motorized trail along the Sacramento River to the west of the shooting range. No comments were received during the ISRMA planning process that were opposed to the co-location of the shooting range and trail. The ISRMA addresses public safety in the area of the proposed range on adjacent public land. A rock quarry is being proposed in the residential area east of the shooting range and over the ridge. Most of the residences in the area of the proposed range are over this ridge. This quarry would also increase noise and traffic in the area. Up to 260 acres of public land would be taken out of federal ownership and become private land within the ISRMA. Over the past 10 years since the approval of the RMP approximately 9000 acres of public land have been acquired in the ISRMA. Lands will continue to be acquired as they become available.

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Monitoring

This action will be monitored by the BLM and Shasta County to ensure that the requirements for development of the property are fulfilled.

BLM will collaborate with the Gun Club to ensure an acceptable administrative route of travel will be provided through or around the property should the county abandon the road. The route will provide administrative access to public lands north of the firing range after the range is developed and the existing public road is blocked.

Public Involvement

Persons and Agencies Consulted

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